SumTotal®

4 Ways Sales & Marketing Should Use Training to Drive Revenue

A SumTotal Executive Report

Introduction

Reduced budgets, increased pressure to meet sales targets, staff turnover and understaffed departments, and the ever-present need to fill the pipeline while not losing customers out the bottom end are all typical challenges for a day in the life of Sales and Marketing professionals. And while branding, prospecting, channel relationships, and lead generation are worthwhile pursuits to meeting those challenges head-on, many organizations are missing another opportunity that can impact success and further drive revenues – training internal and external resources.

Yes, training, but not in the traditional sense. Successful organizations are delivering training in new ways to the most important audiences of sales teams, channel partners, and customers.

- Target training and information delivery based on skill level, partner type, customer purchase history, or other relevant information, to get the most impact.

- Engage prospective customers with needs-based learning, quizzes, and multi-media.

- Reinforce learning with short, online refreshers.

- Gain faster speed-to-market using a 24/7/365 environment.

- Keep external audiences in-the-know with learning solutions for their mobile devices.

This executive report presents findings from SumTotal's Training and Information Sharing survey of Sales and Marketing professionals. Additional information about the sample and survey methodology is contained in the Methodology section at the end of this report.

58.4%

of Sales executives are struggling with budget and staffing issues in 2011.

Over **57%**

of Marketing executives focus their time on acquiring new customers.

Training to Drive Success

Consider 4 ways Sales and Marketing Professionals should be using training to achieve success:

1. **Streamline**
   Consolidate training into consistent, "always on" training that's easy to deliver and consume.

2. **Measure**
   Know who's accessing training and information and how it's impacting results.

3. **Target**
   Be relevant. Provide training and information to those who would benefit.

4. **Simplify**
   Reduce the amount of time you put into creating training and managing logistics.

A training and information sharing strategy supported by robust and integrated underlying technology provides the means for achieving these goals. Several key findings in this study validate the need for a definitive training and information sharing strategy:

- Sales professionals who don't provide sales training were more likely to report challenges with meeting sales targets (68% vs. 58%)

- Marketers who don't provide customer training were more likely to report challenges with customer retention (44% vs. 12%) and cross-sell (40% vs. 35%)

What are the top challenges you're facing as a professional in 2011? (select all that apply)

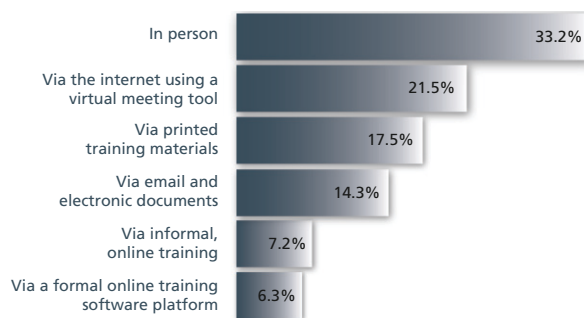| Functional Group	Challenges	Response Percent
Sales	Meeting Sales Targets	13.1%
	Sales Turnover	32.1%
	Understaffed or under budgeted sales team	26.3%
Marketing	Brand awareness	42.9%
	Acquiring new customers	57.1%
	Customer satisfaction and retention	31.0%
	Cross-selling and Up-selling to existing customers	40.5%

Yet 61% of the Sales and Marketing professionals surveyed don't provide ongoing training to their key constituents – sales teams, channel partners, and customers. And 41% indicate that training and information sharing was not an initial priority for their organization.
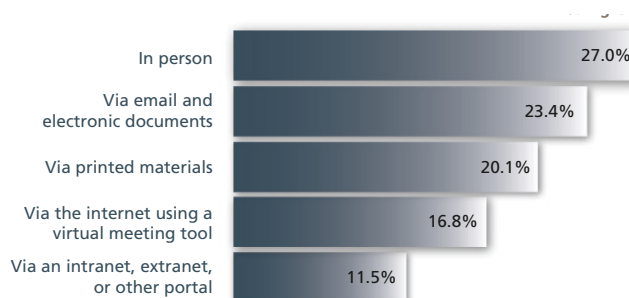
1. Streamline

Training and information sharing is most often provided in-person. There are obvious benefits to in-person training; however the cost and coordination of such efforts can be prohibitive. This may be why 40.5% of Sales executives indicated their current training practices are too time consuming and 27% indicated they are too costly while 26.3% of Marketing leaders indicate current practices are too time consuming and 28.9% say they are too costly.

How do you provide training? (select all that apply)

In person	33.2%
Via the internet using a virtual meeting tool	21.5%
Via printed training materials	17.5%
Via email and electronic documents	14.3%
Via informal, online training	7.2%
Via a formal online training software platform	6.3%

How is information provided? (select all that apply)

In person	27.0%
Via email and electronic documents	23.4%
Via printed materials	20.1%
Via the internet using a virtual meeting tool	16.8%
Via an intranet, extranet, or other portal	11.5%

Technology is successfully leveraged by businesses and consumers alike because of the efficiencies and conveniences it provides. Consider redirecting funds from costlier in-person or paper-based training and information sharing methods to a more efficient online system that not only saves time and money, but also has staying power.

- Online training is available 24/7/365, so users can access and re-access training and information anytime and anywhere

- Set up automatic reminders for users to take follow-up courses to refresh or extend skills and knowledge

- Users can download and view training from their mobile devices to be consumed off-site, on-the-job, or even on a plane

- Information is delivered in a consistent manner with the ability to test users for comprehension

With the right technology in place, these efficient and cost-effective tools can improve speed-to-market, whether with new product knowledge, refined sales skills, or the latest value added information for customers.

What are the main challenges with your existing approach to training and information sharing? (select all that apply)

Percentage	Challenge
19.5%	Too time consuming
17.1%	Not enough manpower to develop training
14.8%	Too costly
14.8%	No follow-through
11.9%	Not enough manpower to follow up
6.7%	No insight into who has viewed the documents
5.2%	No insight into who has completed training
4.3%	Not targeted enough

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2. Measure

Many professionals are being asked to provide returns on investments (ROI) into new technology deployments. With an online training delivery system, organizations not only see who has accessed training and information, you can correlate that back to sales performance. Understand who's engaged with the organization and who is not, in order to boost sales skills, determine partner commitment, or gauge the interest level of customers and prospects.

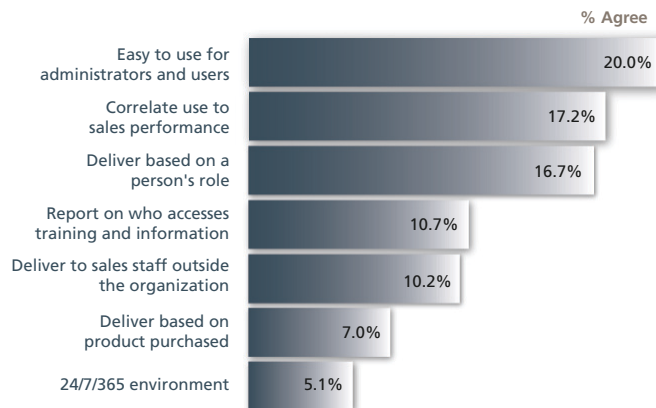|	
Did the training/ information solve the problem or meet the objective?	**Individual Performance:** Gauge individual improvement for a specific sales representative, channel partner, and customer. **Organizational Performance:** What was the impact on the organization as whole?
Was the training/ information cost-effective from an ROI perspective, as compared to other methods, or based on the amount of time invested?	**Individual Performance:** Compare individual improvement to cost/ time per individual. **Organizational Performance:** Compare organizational improvement to total cost/ time.

3. Target

Key to success is understanding target audiences, what they need to make an impact, and delivering content specific to their needs. Provide training and information based on specific audiences. For example:

- Distribute advanced materials to those individuals who are already certified
- Refresh basic skills with those who are struggling

- Provide different information to VARs vs. Referral partners
- Present cross-sell and up-sell opportunities based on products that have been purchased
- Get the attention and buy-in of prospective customers with need-based information and training delivery

What do you consider to be the most important features of a training and information sharing solution? (select all that apply)

% Agree

Feature	%
Easy to use for administrators and users	20.0%
Correlate use to sales performance	17.2%
Deliver based on a person's role	16.7%
Report on who accesses training and information	10.7%
Deliver to sales staff outside the organization	10.2%
Deliver based on product purchased	7.0%
24/7/365 environment	5.1%

- Delivering targeted training and information (based on role or product/service purchased) is an important feature for 23.7% of the audience.
- 20% require ease of use
- 17.2% want the ability to correlate usage to sales performance

4. Simplify

And finally, simplify information delivery by leveraging existing and ready-made content. Organizations can reduce the amount of time it takes to create and manage training, for example, by turning PowerPoint presentations into training courses. Many successful organizations purchase proven, off-the-shelf training to develop sales skills or offer customer value-added information. Set up automatic course assignments and reminders, and eliminate the need for logistics planning and scheduling of on-site training. Again, by leveraging technology organizations can improve speed to market and enable greater focus on other tasks that impact the bottom line.

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Conclusion

Implementing a training and information sharing strategy, supported by robust and integrated underlying technology, provides the means for achieving these objectives. Whether those goals involve enabling and engaging sales and partner teams or customers and prospects, online training and information sharing allows organizations to distribute targeted value to important audiences and measure the impact of that value on the bottom line.

Regardless of who is involved in the decision-making process, tools like SumTotal's Extended Enterprise solution can help organizations provide valuable and impactful information to key constituents.

SumTotal's solution has many key advantages, including:

- Information can be targeted to specific groups (based on role, product purchased, or other attributes)
- Use of training and information can be tracked to determine who is completing training or viewing documents
- Usage of training and information can be correlated to sales results
- Training can be developed using off-the-shelf courseware, tools that turn your PowerPoint presentations into training courses, or professional curriculum developers
- Any skill level can post documents, announcements, or other information for users to view
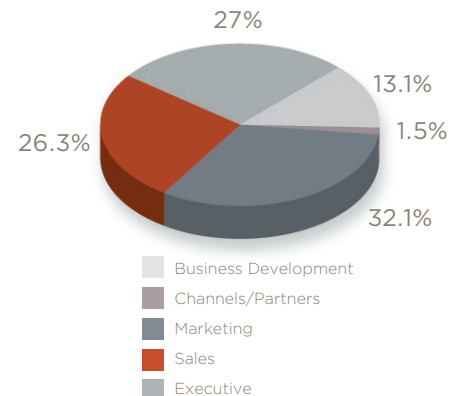- Expedite information distribution via commonly used mobile devices

Methodology

In 2011, SumTotal Systems conducted a global survey of senior professionals in Sales, Marketing, and Channels to gather details about training practices and needs for their key constituents including sales teams, channel partners, and customers. Survey respondents were primarily Sales and Marketing professionals in organizations with 2,500 employees or less across a multitude of industries.
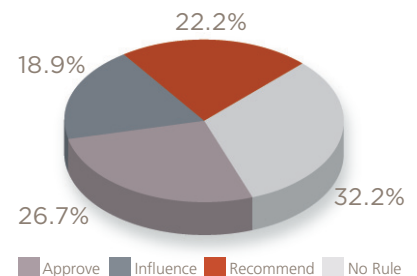
Company Size of Respondents

84.7%
4.4%
10.9%

■ 1-2500 ■ 2501-9999 □ 10000+
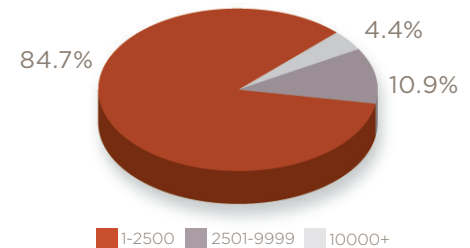
Job Function of Respondents

27%
13.1%
1.5%
26.3%
32.1%

□ Business Development
■ Channels/Partners
■ Marketing
■ Sales
■ Executive

What is your role in purchasing a new solution?

22.2%
18.9%
26.7%
32.2%

■ Approve ■ Influence ■ Recommend □ No Rule

More Information

For more information on the Extended Enterprise solution:
www.sumtotalsystems.com/solutions/extended-enterprise-solutions.html

About SumTotal

SumTotal Systems, Inc. is the global leader in complete learning and talent management software that enables organizations to more effectively drive business strategy and growth. Recognized by industry analysts as the most comprehensive solution, SumTotal provides full employee lifecycle management, including a core system of record, from a single provider for improved business intelligence. The company offers customers of all sizes and in all industries the most flexibility and choice with multiple purchase, configuration, and deployment options. We have increased the performance of the world's largest organizations including Sony Electronics (NYSE: SNE), AstraZeneca (NYSE: AZN [ADR]; London: AZN), Amway, GKN (London: GKN), and Seagate (NYSE: STX).

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